

# via pacis

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# THE CATHOLIC WORKER

A MOVEMENT WITH A PAST & A FUTURE

by Frank Cordaro

May 1 marks the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Worker movement. I came to the C.W. movement in the spring of 1975 and spent that summer at the C.W. in Davenport, Iowa. I had just read William Miller's book, A Harsh and Dreadful Love, a history of the C.W. movement up to 1950 and wanted to experience the movement firsthand. I was in the seminary at the time and had spent the previous summer in a black parish in the South Bronx in New York. I came away from my Bronx experience wanting a mode of Christian living which addressed the crucial issues of social injustice from a Catholic perspective. I had been a Charismatic five years and was looking for more "meat" in a Christian witness.

I remember my first visit to the Davenport house. It was one of the last cold days of a lingering winter. I was helping serve the dinner meal to the over 50 men who made their way to the little house by the tracks when the police brought in a man who had been living in a boxcar the last several weeks. He could barely walk and was in dire need of a bath. Margaret Quigley instructed me to "Give that guy a bath!" Margaret liked to shock potential new members of the community with tasks that quickly took the romance out of service to the poor—a tactic I would later adopt in Des Moines. Saintly George Dean came to my rescue and offered to help. We began to peel off the layers of clothes the man was wearing while he was still half-conscious sitting on the stool in the bathroom. The more we took off the worse the smell grew. There was no doubt of his being exposed for several weeks to outdoor living. George made sure the clothes were properly disposed of while I carefully put the man in the lukewarm bath water. He stayed half-conscious throughout his bath. We dried him off and put him to bed after a thin bowl of soup—that was all he could get down. George made sure he had new clothing. The next morning he accused us of robbing the few dollars he thought he still had and left the house in a huff. I knew then I wanted to spend the rest of the summer at the Davenport house. I had no idea I would spend the next seven years helping to start and continue a Catholic Worker house in Des Moines.

Hospitality, the living with and sharing of basic necessities with the poor, made C.W. life real. When many of my friends were leaving the Church and having identity problems my life at the C.W. was very concrete—we gave food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless and clothes to the naked. It was not until later that I grew to appreciate the deeper and broader aspects of the movement. If the Catholic Worker were only a shelter home meeting the emergency needs of the poor it would have disappeared long ago along with the many shelters started in the 1930s.

But it had a philosophy behind it, a clear purpose and program. The C.W. is a lay movement which wishes to make the world a better place in which to live. Catholic Workers see the social ills of our day as primarily issues of religion. Any effort to correct the wrongs must be rooted in a solid faith perspective. The C.W. advocated a three-part program: houses of hospitality where the needs of the poor were met by the personal sharing of the rich; clarification of thought, wherein the social issues of the day are discussed openly with an eye on the Gospels and social teachings of the Church in order to get a Catholic perspective; and a back-to-the-land movement in order to move society toward a more decentralized and egalitarian economic system. The C.W. embraces the charisms of voluntary poverty, nonviolence and radical personalism. The Catholic Workers hope in practicing the charisms and fulfilling their three-part program they will help to build the social order called for in the Gospels and in the Church's teachings. It is a movement from the bottom up.

It is a movement as rich in philosophy as it is in witness with the poor. Over the last 50 years it was not easy for it to maintain its clear vision. The person who held the vision and steered the C.W. through most of the last 50 years was Dorothy Day, co-founder and editor of The Catholic Worker. She, more than anyone else, was responsible for the consistent C.W. vision in season and out.

During the Depression years and after the war when the strivings of organized labor were foremost, the C.W. was among the working person's strongest supporters. Yet, the C.W. was eventually pushed to the edge of the labor movement of the 30s and 40s because of its insistence on a Christian social reconstruction. The C.W. did not recognize the major unionist ideology of the time which supported the division of labor and management and allowed for the continuance of the materialistic values of present-day capitalism.

The C.W.'s philosophy of a Christian economics was largely influenced by the writings of the French personalist Emanuel Mounier. Pope John Paul's most recent encyclical on Labor relies heavily on Mounier. Many of the Pope's perspectives and criticisms of modern-day capitalism are the same ones held by the C.W. in the 30s and 40s.

The C.W. was the only Catholic organization to support Catholic conscientious objectors during WWII and the only Catholic group to adhere to pacifism as a valid position for the Catholic. Their position on pacifism cost the C.W. dearly during the war in friends and supporters. It caused a major split among the houses around the country. Today the Church's experience during the Vietnam war and the bishops' struggle with the immorality of nuclear weapons has validated the C.W.'s early courageous stand on pacifism.

One of the most important aspects of the Catholic Worker movement is its distinctly American character. While remaining thoroughly Catholic the C.W. was able to adhere to the best principles of our American social experience: personal liberty, social and economic equality, a healthy dislike for big government and political coercion, and a general positive belief in the endless human possibilities for the future.

Today the Catholic Worker movement is growing. In 1975 Davenport was the only C.W. house in Iowa. Today there are five other C.W. houses in the state: Des Moines, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City and Dubuque. There are many more springing up all over the country and into Canada. The folks at the old New York Catholic Worker don't even know for sure how many there are. We no longer have Dorothy Day as our guiding light but we do have the last 50 years as a touchstone. The farsightedness of the movement's philosophy is relevant today more than ever! The everyday practice of hospitality is as much in need today as it was in the 1930s.

The C.W. made an important contribution to the American Church in the last 50 years and we have an even more important role to play in the next 50 years. The eyes of the whole Church have turned to Latin America. The Church's suffering experience in Latin America will have profound effect on the whole Church in years to come. The C.W. will be able to understand and integrate the Latin American experience for a North American Church because of its long history of preference to the poor—seeing the world from the bottom up. As the effort to stop the arms race builds the Church will look to the C.W. for examples of nonviolent witness.

What is lacking in today's Catholic Workers is the intellectual discipline to study just what it means to be a Catholic Worker. For most people in the movement the importance of hospitality is readily visible and easily emulated. Hospitality is and always should be the cornerstone on which the Catholic Workers build their everyday lives but the C.W. social vision is badly needed. To help us move into the next 50 years I highly recommend to all Catholic Workers to re-read the writings of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. William Miller's books A Harsh and Dreadful Love and Dorothy Day—A Biography, and most recent, Mel Piehl's book Breaking Bread—The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America should be standard text for anyone interested in the C.W. experience.

Happy anniversary, Catholic Worker—we'll only be as strong as we know our past and keep faithful to its ideals in the future.†





## APPEAL

We need all kinds of tools, garden, household, and automotive; we need all kinds of food, especially meat, eggs, milk and fruit juices; cleaning supplies; first aid supplies; diapers; trash bags; playground equipment; small shrubs or fruit trees; seeds for the garden; and we very much need money to pay our bills.

We thank everyone who has been so generous in helping to sustain us to the present.



Mass continues to be celebrated every Friday night at 8:00 pm at Lazarus House, 1317-8th St. There will be only one Friday night discussion in April, on the 22nd, due to other events taking place. In May the discussions will be held on the 6th and 20th.

VIA PACIS is published by the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, Box 4551, Des Moines, Iowa 50306; telephone (515) 243-0765. Our members are:

Sharron Clemens  
Frank Cordaro (in absentia)  
Jim Harrington  
Dottie Lynch  
Patti McKee  
Maggie Olson  
Norman Searah  
David Stein

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Income tax day is a day to publicly express opposition to war taxes. This year, Friday April 15 will be observed by a noon rally at the Federal Building in Des Moines, sponsored by Iowa Peace Network, and with leafletting at the Post Office, 2nd and University, from 5 PM to midnight. Leafletting will be coordinated by the C.W. and by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Last year, Iowa Peace Network bought grain with money donated in amounts equivalent to withheld war taxes. The grain was presented to the I.R.S. After they refused it, it was donated to local food programs. So far this year, no money for grain has been donated to I.P.N. People are encouraged to bring grain to the noon rally for presentation to the I.R.S. that afternoon.

Individuals express objection to paying for war in a variety of ways, ranging from avoidance to protest to resistance. One can live in voluntary poverty, refuse to pay the federal phone tax, put money in an escrow account for a World Peace Tax Fund. One's degree of risk can escalate as one's level of commitment increases. Plug in at the level you can deal with. The Ligutti Peace and Justice Center, 1301 8th Street, has resources that can help you understand your options.



John La Forge is serving six months in Beltrami County jail in Minnesota for spilling blood at Bemidji State College, where the Sperry Univac Corporation was recruiting seniors for employment. Sperry Univac makes computers that are used in various nuclear weapons systems. Barb Katt is facing a similar sentence unless she pays restitution to the corporation.

They can be contacted through the Center for Justice and Peace, 313 2nd St., Bemidji, MN, or Fr. Paul Kabat, (218) 751-6061.



## CATHOLIC WORKER

May 1 is the 50th Anniversary of the Catholic Worker Movement. Our plans for celebrating that day (and to welcome Frank home) are: Mass, 1:00 PM, followed by a festive gathering of all our friends. This will be taking place at Lazarus House (1317-8th St.). If you would like more information, or would like to contribute ideas, please call us at (515) 243-0765.

## Mother's Day Peace Celebration Women's Hope Festival



PICNIC/HOPE OFFERINGS/WALK to Wellman Dynamics, manufacturer of Cruise missile bodies

**Sun. May 8, 1983**

Noon - 4 p.m.  
Rainbow Park

**Creston, Iowa**

80 miles S.W. of Des Moines  
on Hwy. 34

On Mother's Day, May 8, 1983, daughters and mothers will gather in Creston, Iowa to embody our hope for a peace-filled future, as well as our present fear and sorrow over the arms race. As life-lovers, we oppose the deadly first-strike Cruise missiles machined in Creston. We go to arouse Iowans and people throughout the Heartland to the danger manufactured there. The Cruise is the final kick in the arms race-- a hair-trigger on the NATO nuclear arsenal.

We join with European women in our common opposition to the December 1983 deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Britain, West Germany and Italy.

A Peace Pilgrimage of walkers will leave Ames May 4 to arrive during the Festival. If you would like to walk all or part of the 135 miles, contact Rebecca at the Catholic Worker in Des Moines.

The Women's Hope Festival will begin with a picnic at noon in Rainbow Park. At 1 PM, women from around the heartland will share hope offerings-- poetry, banners, songs, dance, mime, photographs of loved ones, whatever symbol expresses your concerns.

All are asked to bring soil from your home community for a tree planting, a peace book to give to the Creston library, a picnic lunch.

The celebration will be our common creation. Men and children are welcome, childcare will be provided.

For more info call:

In Ames: Marilyn Fenn,  
(515) 292-6637

In Des Moines: Rebecca Rosenbaum,  
(515) 243-7471

WE WILL RETURN to the S.A.C. base in Omaha for non-violent protest this August 8th. Contact Tom Cordaro at Loaves & Fishes house, 134 Campus, Ames, IA, 50010, (515) 292-4381. Tom is available for speaking engagements.



# EASTER REFLECTIONS

by Sharron Clemens

Christ's most pervasive and effective method of teaching was his personal example. The most powerful was his unselfish submission to crucifixion and death for our benefit. The most comforting and reassuring was his resurrection and presence on earth thereafter, to re-emphasize the point of his coming in the first place.

These radical events provoked a watershed in our relationship with God. The question is no longer, "Who has God on their side and why?" God's response to humanity's crucifixion of his son proved once and for all God is on everyone's side regardless. God loves everyone immeasurably and unconditionally. Moreover, God's favor and love are beyond manipulation because we have nothing God needs. The questions have become, "Are we on God's side, and is it really worth the effort and struggle to attempt that journey of the heart and soul?"

The answers to what it means to be on God's side are illustrated in Christ's example, confirmed by his words and deeds.

God's son was born to poor parents of an oppressed nation. Soon after his birth, his parents fled with him to become political refugees in Egypt as King Herod massacred every male infant of their faith in an attempt to kill Jesus, a potential threat to his power.

Christ was ruthlessly persecuted for who he was and what he stood for. He responded to that persecution with forgiveness and love. He never condemned anyone, but counseled a more loving, merciful, forgiving, and just attitude to everyone he encountered for fear they would ultimately condemn themselves to self-consuming hatred.

Christ was a pacifist in the truest sense, but not passive. He used every ounce of strength he possessed to passionately fight all evil and injustice he encountered. His total obedience to God made him a dangerous revolutionary in the eyes of those whose interests lay in the preservation of the law and status quo.

Public opinion did not deter him from expressing his heart, or from being true to himself and others. He always stood up for the have-nots and the oppressed vs. the haves and oppressors.

He was usually found in the company of "riff-raff and undesirables", much to the pique of those more socially acceptable.

He had few creature comforts, but would not compromise himself or anyone else to obtain more. Consequently, he often did without, when he could have had it all.

Christ's relationship with his followers illustrates what would be required of and granted to those attempting to make the journey from sin and death to life-giving love.

Christ's followers, like him, were not exempt from the vicissitudes of life. They were not above or beyond worldly struggles but immersed in them. Discipleship, they soon discovered, was a tough journey which would stretch their physical, emotional and spiritual capacities to the limit if they let it. Christ did everything he could to help and encourage them except force his will and ways on them or do their growing for them. The only final failure in Christ's eyes was to irrevocably give up on God and the journey. His followers consistently failed and betrayed him, but he never failed or betrayed them. Judas was able to betray Christ because Christ would not betray Judas with his ugly secret the night before Christ's execution.

To those more faithful and loving, Christ's crucifixion was a crushing blow. The sense of security, self-confidence, courage and love he had given them was breached by the temporal forces at work. Few stood near to minister to and care for him as he died and was buried.

With his execution an accomplished feat, his followers broken, he was resurrected to a victory over the ultimate in human sin and death. Christ then came back, making his victory ours, if we would only accept it and make it truly our own.

In this season of Easter, culminating in Pentecost, we celebrate that victory of long ago, as well as the ways we have made it our own. There are many such signs of Easter today, which provide us the love, hope, strength, direction and courage to carry on.

Is the struggle and journey worth the effort? There is so much to overcome in ourselves and in our world. On a personal level, our jealousies, greed, fear, hate and cynicism provoke us into clutching costly and detrimental "security vices" that ultimately breed more insecurity and sin. On a global level these security vices mushroom into mass violence, oppression, deprivation and threat of global nuclear genocide.

If we do not do more in an attempt to make Easter our own experience we will probably end up like Judas, betraying God with our ugly secrets, and in the process condemning the earth and ourselves to death with nuclear suicide. We desperately need to find, experience and celebrate the Easter that potentially exists in each one of us if we are to survive physically, emotionally and spiritually. +



## Hospitality

by Norman Searah

We all live but one life.  
We all live in one world.  
We are all one family  
As different as we are.

In giving hospitality to the women and families who come to us, we come to accept their differences, as they accept our differences and our beliefs. At the same time we

extend this acceptance outward in the form of love and care to those outside the community we call our home. We often find ourselves going that extra mile, extending our hand beyond its usual reach. The people who donate to us do the same, and become part of us and our guests.

I am learning and teaching that hospitality is more than giving a place to sleep, it's a willingness to go that extra mile. +



# WHAT'S HAPPENNING

by Jim Harrington

Louis de Benedette of the Cedar Rapids Catholic Worker has completed his 30 day sentence at the Polk County jail for his part in the demonstration at the Federal Court-house during Gary Eklund's trial for refusing to register for the draft.

Of the 21 people arrested only Lou received a jail sentence. He pled guilty as charged and then refused to do "community service" as an alternative to jail. Lou has nothing against serving the community; the problem is he devotes his life to such service and did not consider it appropriate punishment for his actions. It would be more of a reward for him.

When I visited Louis during his confinement, I was appalled by conditions at Polk County jail. The U.S. Justice Dept. prides itself on being a leader in upgrading penal standards and conditions, yet they chose to confine Lou in the local snake pit where conditions are so bad that even the state of Iowa has condemned the place. But who has ever accused the Justice Dept. of consistency?

Former Ambassador to El Salvador Robert White was in town, and thanks to Sister Gwen of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, a public press conference was arranged. Ambassador White (fired by President Reagan with lightning speed after his taking office) characterized Reagan's continuing commitment to a military solution to El Salvador's problems as nothing more than the President's inability to acknowledge that he made a mistake early in his presidency, when he targeted El Salvador as a place to exercise his militaristic posture against communism, real or imagined. White's criticism of Reagan is not that he erred but that he continues to pursue a failed policy long after most of our allies abroad and most people at home recognize the error. The administration also recognizes the error but is not big enough to publicly acknowledge it and seek a negotiated settlement. One might wonder how much more of our foreign and domestic policy is based on a face-saving, stay-the-course attitude rather than on the realities surrounding us.

On the lighter side of the news, Phyllis Schlafly also came to town for an appearance at Drake University. For those in the C.W. community who suffered through her presentation on a revised look at feminism, the general reaction was, "Yuck".

Some of us have been advocating improvements in Iowa's Aid for Dependent Children/unemployed father program. We feel the program is potentially a tool to help homeless families re-establish a home and to prevent those seriously threatened by economic conditions from becoming homeless. We are not looking for progress, mind you, we are just trying to recoup losses imposed by the Iowa legislature several years ago when they abolished the unemployed father program completely. Following that, an unemployed father had to

leave the home completely in order for his wife and children to be assisted. Last year the program was reinstated in part. The father does not have to leave the home but his needs are not included in the grant. When he eats he does so knowing that his food is taken from the meager allotment intended for his wife and children.

This arrangement hardly strengthens family ties, and the chairman of the House Human Services Committee is sympathetic to restoring the father's needs to the amount of the grant, which was done before the Legislature "got tough" several years ago. However, this would require adding between 1 and 1 1/2 million dollars to the program. Where will Iowa get this money?

Recently lobbyists for cigarette distributors in Iowa have pushed for the state to allow vendors to keep an additional 1.2 million of the taxes they collect, to compensate the vendors for their services. We feel this kind of subsidy would be better directed if given to hard-pressed families, rather than to cigarette distributors already making a killing. Pardon the pun.

The Iowa Catholic Peace Ministry has a film, "Gods of Metal", available for a fee of \$10. It is a 27 minute documentary of the nuclear arms race and its impact on our society, and has been nominated for an Academy Award. It was produced by Maryknoll and can be acquired from Sister Gwen at the Catholic Peace Ministry, 42nd & Grand, 274-3687. We would like to give this film wide exposure not only with church groups but with less traditional audiences such as service clubs. As a special incentive for booking the film in one of the latter settings David Stein and I have come up with a plan. If one of you can book the film with your local Kiwanis or Lions club we will conduct a fund raiser to pay half the fee. If you can arrange a showing at your local V.F.W. or American Legion we will hand-deliver it. Whether it arrives on schedule depends on hitchhiking conditions.

In mid-February all the weekend masses in the Des Moines diocese reflected on the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on nuclear arms. Then discussion groups in each of the 10 regions of the diocese were conducted to get feedback on the letter. Bishop Dingman is drawing on this experience to formulate his educational program on nuclear arms. Our Patti McKee served as a discussion facilitator for one of the regions of the diocese.

Members of Holy Trinity parish come to Lazarus House once a month to join us in a dinner they provide and prepare. All of us, guests and community members, appreciate their generosity and enjoy the added fellowship.

We've had a number of distinguished visitors in recent weeks, including columnist Colman McCarthy, and Bob Greenberger of the Wall Street Journal. John Shiel of Washington, D.C. returned to Des Moines for his sentencing for the draft trial demonstration. He got probation, and stayed with us for a while before going back East for sentencing for demonstrating on behalf of homeless people at the U.S. Capitol. John has a special place in

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# NOT-EASILY- classified ads



(To place a free Not-Easily-Classified Ad for your hospitality and peace-related needs, contact David Stein at the Catholic Worker. Deadline is May 25. Stein reserves the right to edit.)

DES MOINES HISPANIC MINISTRY needs funds for English classes and for food & shelter, A/V equipment, copy machine, storage space, bilingual volunteers, Spanish-language materials. Call Verne Lyon, (515) 283-2115

WHILE MILLIONS GO HUNGRY the U.S. Govt. stores over 200 million lbs. of surplus food in caves beneath Kansas City, at a weekly cost of \$600,000, and it keeps growing. On July 4, 1983, people will go to K.C. to demand food be released. Contact: Community for Creative Non-Violence 1345 Euclid St. NW Washington, DC 20009 202-332-4332

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE 60th anniversary national conference, July 14-17 Lafayette College, Easton, PA. Write W.R.L., 339 Lafayette St., New York, N.Y. for details.

DAVENPORT C.W. planning demonstrations against war taxes at IRS office, Fed. Bldg., Davenport, April 11-15, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM. Tax program, discussion, and film, "Gods of Metal" at Davenport library April 25, 7:30 PM. Catholic Worker, Box 3813, Dav., IA 52802. 319-324-8431

CHICAGO C.W. is looking for a farm, also needs van or pickup truck. 4652 N. Kenmore, Chi., IL 60640 312-561-5073

SPANISH-SPEAKING PRIEST needed to minister to Hispanic prisoners. Contact Chaplain Sholes, Polk County Jail, Des Moines.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE for Peace and Freedom will sponsor its traditional Mother's Day Peace Festival and march in Des Moines. Call Katherine Wisdom at 279-0622.

ROSEBUD New community next door to Lazarus House, houses staffers of various groups working for social justice. House needs improvement. Materials needed- cement, lumber, paint. Skills needed- plumber, and persons who can make house level, using jacks in basement. 1321 8th St. 244-4810

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY continuing workshops, open house April 9, solar equipment sold, door-to-door solicitors needed. Energy & Self-Reliance Center 3500 Kingman Blvd, Des Moines 277-0253 or call Jane Magers, 278-2283

AMERICAN INDIAN CONSULTANT SERVICE primarily for women w/children Jewel Slick, director 3610 Columbia, D.M., IA 50313 282-7968



Kirk Lawler

(continued from page 4)

our hearts. He gave up on labor union and Democratic Party politics some years ago to devote his life to "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable". John is well known to peace activists, soupline regulars, and federal and local prosecutors throughout the land.

And in the near future we look forward to seeing some other notables, namely three of the well-known exterior decorators currently

finishing their sentences at Leavenworth for modifying the sign at Offutt Air Force Base. The sign definitely needed work since it read, "Peace is our profession". The decorators corrected this to read, "War is our profession". I've seen pictures of their work and admit it's a little sloppy. But many Defense Dept. contractors reputedly do shoddy work and they don't wind up in prison. Perhaps our friends

should have held out for a cost-plus contract instead of just volunteering their services. Anyway, John Hutchens and Bill Douglas are scheduled for release from Leavenworth March 30 and Frank Cordaro will be released April 29. It will be good to see them again in more familiar places. +



# CW POSITIONS EXPLAINED

by Richard Cleaver

As King he claims dominion over all creation, that he may present to you, his almighty Father, an eternal and universal Kingdom: a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

--Preface of Christ the King

In the last issue we discussed the economic position of the Catholic Worker movement. Talking about that separately from a discussion of the political structures of a society is artificial, since the political system serves to regulate economic practice and at the same time justify it, while the economic arrangements fuel the political power. Given such an intimate connection, this part of our series may best be read as a continuation of Part 1.

It is fitting that the section on political structures should come just now. As I write this, we have just celebrated the feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday of the liturgical year. For Catholic Workers, and all who place their lives in Christ's hands, we pledge once again our allegiance to the King whose "dominion over all creation" makes any earthly allegiance meaningless. The feast asks us to consider whether we truly act as if we believed that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to examine what we have done to bring about the Kingdom we pray for in the Lord's Prayer, a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

Most people today take it for granted that this Kingdom is to be achieved either by participating in what is commonly (if absent-mindedly) called "the democratic process"; or else, in countries where that does not exist or has become a mockery, to overthrow one regime and replace it with another where it is assumed (rather naively) that "the democratic process" will come into play. No amount of studying the history of political revolutions seems to be able to convince people of the baselessness of this assumption. We don't even really examine that phrase, "democratic process". Presumably it means the rule of the majority, tempered, we hope, by a concern for the rights of minorities and free access to what is now referred to as "the marketplace of ideas". (What is the going rate for an idea these days? And what is the percentage of inflation compared to last year's ideas?) The Kingdom then becomes the Jeffersonian commonwealth, or the classless society, or even the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In spite of the fact that the churches have gone along with this notion in greater or lesser degrees ever since Constantine, Catholic Workers are among those who denounce this view as blasphemy. For us, all complicity with states is a kind of idolatry, putting human institutions in the place reserved for the King of all, the risen Lord. Not only

that, but we see states as the chief supporters and agents of violence and injustice, established and maintained to protect wealth and privilege. Even the most "democratic" of states is guilty of this. As Thoreau wrote, "A government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice." But for a Christian, establishing justice is, as the Synod of Bishops proclaimed in 1974, "a constitutive dimension" of preaching the Gospel. So for us the struggle for justice must take precedence over any governmental system.

This position is often called Christian anarchism. There may be other words that describe our position more clearly and carry with them less emotional freight. Still, since this is the usual term, let's look at what is meant by it.

This is easier said than done, because unlike some political theories, anarchism is not one thing. There is no single "line", no founder whose works can be pored over by devout disciples to produce some dogma. If there were, Christians who can only be disciples of Christ could not subscribe to it. But anarchism is really just a tendency to be suspicious of big institutions and of the domination of one person by another; it is a belief that what holds societies together is not force and fear of



punishment but the cultivation of an ever-increasing disposition to be servant to all, that mutual assistance and not competition leads to a better life for all. Emma Goldman described anarchism as "the philosophy of a new social order based on the released energies of the individual and the free association of liberated individuals." For her anarchism, far from being a dogmatic system, was simply a "beautiful idea". For the Spaniards who died for it before and during the Civil War, it was "the idea".

Compare all this with Jesus' constant teaching that the one who wishes to be greatest must be the servant of all, a teaching he considered so central that at the Last Supper he gave his friends not only the Eucharist but the example of the Lord of all washing the feet of his followers. Recall, during this Advent season, the triumphant cry

of the prophet Zechariah, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the war horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off.

Christ is our King, no earthly ruler--but Christ is no commander of armies; instead our King is "humble", the



suffering servant who "has borne our griefs". "And with his stripes we are healed."

It is often claimed that Paul's instructions in Romans 13 and elsewhere require us to be "good citizens" and support our government. Jim Dubert's essay on this subject, on page 1 of this issue, takes better care of this argument than there is space for here. In passing, though, it should be pointed out that we are citizens of the Kingdom, and if we truly have rendered to God what is our due as citizens, there is no room left for allegiance to Caesar. In any case, "submission", a passive sufferance of another's power, is a far cry from "support", an active approval of and complicity in that power.

In fact, God made it plain to Samuel that God regarded Israel's demand for a central government to be an apostasy, a defection from trust in God to follow the corrupt customs of "the nations". In I Samuel 8, the people are clamoring for a king. Samuel turns to God for guidance and receives the reply, "They have rejected me from being king over them." God instructs Samuel to warn them what they are in for: "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots....He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks....He will take the tenth of your grain" and the best of everything, and the result? "You shall be his slaves." Still the people demand a King, partly to be "like the other nations", partly it seems from sheer laziness. It is getting harder to live justly and the memory of God's liberating work is fading.

We too feel this way. What it boils down to is we consider it impossible to live in justice as Christ asks, so we give up--the deadly sin of sloth.

Maybe one reason we give up is a sense of hopelessness. But Paul reminds us that we have been bap-



## 2: POLITICAL STRUCTURES

tized into Christ and thereby have become members of his body. We are no longer alone, left to our own devices. Belief in the Mystical Body of Christ is central to our lives as Catholic Workers. Because of it we can continue year in and year out opening our homes to strangers. Because of it we can confront those who are preparing for war and do our duty in love to convince them of their error. And because of it we can trust that beneath the brokenness of the people we meet, the brokenness that makes them hard, greedy, selfish and violent, there too is a limb of Christ's body. Like the Russian Orthodox, we see the Church, indeed the whole of humanity, not as a hierarchy ruling a passive people, but a sobornost, an organism, a unity, an ingathering of varied, even contradictory, personalities, formed into a harmonious whole.



Since we talk about the Body of Christ so much, folks often think we are limiting our belief in the goodness of human beings to Christians, or else simply replacing the State with the Church as some medieval Popes tried to do. On the contrary, we see that throughout history there has been an outward movement of God's love, from particular people like Abraham, to whole nations like Israel, and finally to the whole world. When the Church tries to take on the roles of authority, it loses its resemblance to the suffering servant whose body it is. We look instead to the Church where it takes up the Cross again, especially in Latin America and Korea, and refuses to serve the powers of this world by explaining away God's liberating acts and Christ's promises of justice.

We live as we do precisely because we believe those promises. We believe that joy comes from giving, not hoarding--thus we have no need of protection for our things. We believe that joy comes from loving actively--thus we have no need to hire others to "do charity". We believe that joy comes from letting love cast out fear--thus we have no need of violence, and no need to hire others, police or soldiers, to do our violence for us. A verse of "The Hobo's Lullaby" comes to mind: "I know the police cause you trouble; they cause trouble everywhere. When you die and go to heaven there'll be no policemen there." But we believe "the Kingdom of God is at hand"--not something you get only after you die, but "at hand". All you have to do is reach out for it. We live in the Kingdom already, and that makes us strangers in all the kingdoms of the earth.

"That's all very nice," I hear you

say, "but the real world doesn't work that way." This is a very common objection but it has never made sense to me. It is plain to see that the "real world" as it is now governed doesn't work at all. As states get stronger, violence increases everywhere. We have no safety in our persons or our goods. We have no security from the utter destruction of nuclear warfare. We have no assurance of adequate food or clothing or shelter unless we are rich or powerful enough to thumb our noses at the state anyway. What else is the state supposed to be for but to guarantee these things--yet as it takes on more and more power, and takes away more and more money, it performs its functions less and less. It appears that the state doesn't "work"--but we are so used to that, we don't question it.

Oddly enough it seems to be those most concerned for peace and justice who turn most quickly to the state for solutions. Legalize this, outlaw that, and all will be well. What has become of Paul's teaching, "All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse"? Law cannot cover all cases, so it's bound to become a source of injustice, a "curse". The true Law is written on our hearts; that law is the law of love, and because of it James can tell us, "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty, for judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment." Thoreau put it more simply: "It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right."

Of course for those who believe (back to Part 1 again!) that economic prosperity is the answer to everything, an error Pope John Paul II has called "economism" in his recent encyclical, perhaps the benefits of a strong state to run the economy seem clearer; but while a decent living is necessary to human dignity, it is not the goal of life. "Hearts



starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses."

"Well, then, if you don't think the system works as it is, what will you put in its place?" First off, we would not, even if we could, "put" anything anywhere. Imposing a new system will not change anything. And nothing will change if we continue to teach people not to trust themselves to be able to take care of themselves, but to leave it to Big Brother. Once we learn to trust our-

selves, we can begin to trust one another. If laziness is the source of the state, fear is surely the fuel. The reason wars and insurrections have played such a big part in the history of revolution is that in such times of crisis, conditions force people to put fear aside and trust themselves and each other to take care of the necessities of life. At such times it is clear what the common good requires and initiative comes forth to serve it.

This is not only true in times of social dislocation, though. If we look around us we see everywhere examples of decentralized, voluntary groups fulfilling important social functions. Volunteer fire departments, symphony orchestras, service clubs and church schools are all such groups. Labor unions are very powerful groups that arose not only independent of but against the active resistance of governments, and they could perform many of the economic functions of a society composed of free associations. Neighborhood and block committees such as many cities already have could take over many other services.

The beginnings of a society free of state tyranny are already every



where. It is enough to strengthen them, to rely on them and on individuals to do what needs to be done. The Popes since Leo XIII have admonished us to let intermediary groups perform all possible functions of society. Pius XI called this principle "subsidiarity" and it has been part of papal teaching ever since: "It is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies."

To be sure, this is a risky path to take--but no more so than the path to global destruction the states have brought us to. And in any case, it is a risk that Christians find in the very act of proclaiming Jesus Christ is Lord. In giving ourselves up to God, however; in trusting God's promises; in knowing that God's faithfulness will prevail; in this we find freedom. And as Pope John XXIII taught us, "Human society is realized in freedom, that is to say, in ways and means in keeping with the dignity of its citizens, who accept the responsibility of their actions, precisely because they are by nature rational beings."

We don't promise a world without suffering. We don't even promise a world without injustice. But we do promise a world where injustice is not the grease that makes the wheels turn. And Christ promises us in return "a Kingdom of truth and life; a Kingdom of holiness and grace; a Kingdom of justice, love and peace."



# community

by Maggie Olson

"There are so many people who live alone, crushed by their loneliness. It is obvious that too much solitude can drive people off the rails, to depression or alcoholism. More and more people seem to have lost their balance because their family life has been unhappy. There are so many who are lost, taking drugs, turning to delinquency; there are so many who are looking for a family and a meaning to their lives. In the years to come we are going to need so many small communities which welcome lost or lonely people, offering them a family and a sense of belonging. At other times, Christians who wanted to follow Jesus opened hospitals and schools. Now that there are so many of these, Christians must commit themselves to the new communities of welcome, to live with people who have no other family, and to show them that they are loved"

from Community and Growth  
by Jean Vanier

As the newest member of the Catholic Worker community, I've come to live with the people, to be among them, to love them, to care. It matters not who they are, where they come from or where they're going. Hopefully I can relate to them. I've been without friends and family, I've been an abused wife, and I am now divorced. I've dealt with mental illness and alcoholism within my own family. I've gone through the death of my first-born and seen my sons leave my home. I've even faced my own death but death holds far less fear than loneliness and lovelessness hold.

Two years ago I owned my own home. I supported myself and my sons on a substantial income I earned as an inspector for Delavan Manufacturing. The bulk of my work was the inspection of jet fuel nozzles for military aircraft.

My oldest son introduced me to the Catholic Worker, after Frank Cordaro visited his school. I began to come to the Worker for Mass on Friday nights. I helped out with supper, watched, listened, pondered. Shortly thereafter I met a man who has become a special friend. Through his example and guidance I've discovered the true meaning of Christ's command for us to love our neighbor; that we must show mercy and love for all humanity; that I am responsible for others.

I then quit my job with Delavan.



The last ten months I've worked in a group home for mentally retarded adults. The group home has helped me to be ready for the community life at the Worker. The mentally retarded deal very simply with life; they ask for love and give love freely. I've enjoyed living and working with them. As much as I've learned, the time has come to take one step further. I've written my letter of resignation and will devote myself entirely to the Catholic Worker. The loss of income will signal the giving up of my "independence" to be replaced by a total giving to Christ's mercy and love.

Living in community will be a way of life and a means of survival for me. My mind and heart need to be nourished. This nourishment is what we receive in community. Relating to others is a normal function needed to sustain life, much as breathing. God created us to need one another and to base our need on His love. We give, receive and grow. We forgive and are forgiven. There will be pain in growth but even the pain is necessary. We must try never to be isolated from others, whether like ourselves or from those who are different. Again I quote Jean Vanier, from his book Eruption to Hope:

"Love is the highest and most profound mystery of the universe, the source and end of all things, but it implies force of character, inner fidelity, intelligence, delicacy of heart and above all the capacity to listen, to accept and to place oneself at the disposition of the other. These attitudes are rare in our society but rare things are often the most beautiful and the heart and mind of man (sic) must be opened toward them." +





# Molly

by Kristin Layng

Molly sits by the mission door, waiting for soup. What state is this? Slowly she pushes a wisp of silver-grey hair out of her good eye, waiting for soup. A woman from social services who Molly can't understand brought her here. A social worker, but not very sociable. If only it would get warmer, Molly would leave. The road is a cruel place in the winter. She is missing three toes to the cold of last winter. And her left thumb doesn't work.

Molly sits by the door to the mission, waiting for soup. Cool soup. She waits for cool soup. She scratches at a sore on her ankle that won't heal. How long has it been there? It wasn't there last winter. Then it was on her arm. They move like that sometimes. Molly smells the soup-- chicken. Dead birds for lunch today.

She waits for the soup.

Phoenix wasn't so bad. There was a young woman there who gave her cigarettes. Camel non-filters. She drove her to the highway. Then Molly came here. Or somewhere. She asks the man next to her for a cigarette. He lights it for her. A real gentleman, although he doesn't look like one. You really can't tell anymore. It seems that the nicest-looking ones will rob you blind. Most of them work for Social Services. This man seems nice, though. Maybe she will ask his name. It is Max. Molly had a friend named Max once. God knows where he is. Maybe in Houston. Or maybe dead. So many people are these days.

The doors are opening for the soup, but it will still be a bit of a wait, Max says. The regulars always get to eat first. Molly is new in town, isn't she. She nods and smiles, coy.

Molly was very beautiful when she lived in Chillicothe. That's in Ohio. Somewhere. Maybe it's not there anymore. There was a climbing tree behind the house next door, and she climbed in it when her father wasn't home, to wait for him. She is still waiting. For soup.



Christa Occhiogrosso

## Draft Resistance

Russ Simmons

The Iowa resisters and other draft resisters from around the Midwest gathered in Chicago to reunite in their efforts to stop registration and the draft. Small group discussions and workshops took most of the three-day gathering, which numbered over 100 strong and represented 8 states.

Meanwhile, in Des Moines, the Iowa resisters appealed for \$300 from the Conscience Support Fund, which began through an Iowa Resister-IPN joint mass mailing funded in part (\$200) by the resisters. The money, if granted, will be used to help continue publication of the PUBLIC RESISTER and other draft newsletters outside the state.

As a whole, the movement, in its first two years, has made some brilliant accomplishments, including: strong showing of support through protests and demonstrations (including the 21-person arrest during Gark Eklund's trial), favorable trial results in the Wayte decision (Los Angeles), Martin decision (Cedar Falls, Iowa), and most recently in the St. Paul Civil Liberties Union's successful efforts to receive a court restraining order against use of student aid forms for punishment of non-registrants. All cases are pending appeals.

We are entering the third year of resistance, and Iowa is still a great place to be in the movement.



# Statement at Sentencing

by Louis de Benedette

It is written in Sacred Scripture not to fear when they haul you into court, or to worry about what you are to say- the Holy Spirit will give the words. Without prejudice toward these words, I have prepared a statement for the court.

I wish to repeat what I said nearly three months ago-- that I am guilty as charged. My thinking has not changed. The registration of young brothers is an evil. The law, by deduction, is equally evil and unjust, and so I disobey law in this matter.

Gary Eklund, on an appeal of a two-year sentence for resisting the registration, stated he was not complying with the law, since he believed that the U.S. was supporting the murder of peasants in El Salvador. I agree with Gary. El Salvador is another Vietnam, a very dirty war. The later assassinated Archbishop Romero asked President Carter not to send arms to his country, since it will only increase the arms race. Four American women have been murdered; 20,000 peasants dead; American guns; government troops trained in Georgia at Ft. Benning; the folly is monumental! The U.S. uses Central America for military reasons. Perhaps in the days to come this country will test a nuclear bomb there.

Why not? they are only peasants and Indians. I am supportive of young men like Gary who refuse to do the killing for this rotten system.

Registration is a lie since the military does not need men. The volunteer army is doing splendidly. There are enough aggressive types in our society to fill the ranks with gusto, and unemployment is doing its part. The lessons of Vietnam have somehow been lost on the nation. What this government wants, what all bullies want is not only the bodies of its men but their minds. It is easier to launch a war, nuclear or conventional, if you have consent and conformity. Registration tries to continue the process of conformity in the young, but brothers ought not to kill and you and I ought to help them not to kill.

I am 39 years old, and I was in the Army during the Vietnam era. I did not have to go to Vietnam but friends died there and countless Vietnamese died too. Violence by France on the Vietnamese, violence by the U.S. on the Vietnamese, finally violence by the Vietnamese on their own and their neighbors. They learned well. Thank God some young men today say No. I was not so courageous or supported.

My counseling career ended at the Department of the Army after I worked as a counseling psychologist in the transition program for those who had been in Vietnam. I was not remaining on as a counselor for the new volunteer

army. Did you know there are 173,000 Vietnam veterans in jail, 60,000 suicides, and many with Agent Orange poisoning? I've recently left a monastery where I was a monk. I have decided to protest the arms race and nuclear weapons. I have been to Latin America and seen the poverty there. I work without pay in a house of hospitality for homeless families and I continue to work against war. I had to act at Gary's trial. I will do it for other young brothers as well. You should do it also; we all should.

Now if what I have been saying sounds pious or political, or whatever, then I will also say that I have a right to speak out if my own life and the lives of friends and family are being threatened. I feel they are, and no law can hold me back from speaking. Our nonviolent civil disobedience is what is left to us in this country of idols and patriotism. I would do it again in the hope that all will choose to live in peace. That right to protest comes from the Gospels and faith.

So I will not cooperate with any sentence of community service or probation. I am already doing community service. You uphold the law. I am no slave to these war laws. I am guilty as I said. A plea for peace. +

(Editor's note: Lou was sentenced to 30 days in jail. See Jim Harrington's "What's Happening" article.)



## PASSOVER

by David Stein

This year, March 28 to April 5 will mark the feast of Passover, when the world's Jews celebrate the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The story of the Exodus is one of the great dramas of human mythology, sometimes thrilling in its promise of God's intervention on behalf of the oppressed, and often horrifying in the violence accompanying that intervention. The customary observance of Passover involves a twice-repeated ritual meal, or Seder, which abounds in mysterious and powerful symbolism.

I remember the words and images and tastes of the seders of my childhood, which were presided over by my grandfather, himself a member of the great Exodus from Eastern Europe in the late 19th-early 20th century. Most of all I remember the solemn recital of the ten plagues which befell Egypt as the fruit of Pharaoh's refusal to release the captive

IF  
YOU  
WANT  
PEACE,  
WORK  
FOR  
JUSTICE

Israelites: blood, frogs, gnats, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the slaying of the firstborn. I was constantly told of the Nazi holocaust by my father, who witnessed its aftermath as a member of the U.S. Army in 1945.

Truly, since the time of Moses and Pharaoh we have seen so much slaughter, torture, and slavery in the world. Often the victims of such wrongs, and their descendants, respond by committing violence against people who are actually innocent of any wrong against them. I have seen this heartbreaking phenomenon among the homeless people in several cities in this country.

There is a wonderful story in the Talmud, which takes place in Heaven, while Pharaoh's army is drowning in the Red Sea. The angels are looking down upon the scene and rejoicing, when God rebukes

them, saying, "Why do you rejoice? Don't you know the Egyptians are also my children?" Apparently even the angels are far enough from God to take pleasure in vengeance! How much farther are most of us.

My prayer for this Passover is that we all may see the common parenthood of God we all share, and turn away from the perverse idea that one can benefit from the exploitation of another. In particular I call upon the leaders of the modern state of Israel to be true to the nobler side of their religion and heritage and end their occupation of neighboring lands, and their shameful export of weapons to murderous right-wing regimes in South Africa, Guatemala, Chile, El Salvador and Argentina, to name but a few of the most notorious examples.

May we celebrate next year in Jerusalem, whose name, in Hebrew, means "City of Peace". \*





# A CALL To PEACE: THE BISHOPS' LETTER

by Patti McKee

A few weeks ago I was called to study the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War, Armaments and Peace. It turned out to be appropriate to study this letter during the season of Lent. The letter calls our country into a Lenten experience, the experience of reconciliation with each other and our God.

The call to reconciliation is centered on Christ, our true peace. "Christ is our peace for he has made us both one, and he has broken down the dividing wall of hostility... that he might create in himself one new man (sic) in the place of two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God." (Eph. 2:14-16, quoted on p.308)

How long has the world settled for a false peace, one based on deterrence by means of nuclear arms, and on exploitation of the poor. The bishops say, "Rather than eliminate the causes of war, the arms race serves only to aggravate the position. As long as extravagant sums of money are poured into the development of new weapons, it is impossible to devote adequate aid to tackling the misery which prevails at the present day in the world....All of these conditions are the reason we have called the arms race with deterrence a "sinful situation", one which must be changed however long and difficult the task." (p.316-17) The bishops only tolerate deterrence "as a step on the way toward progressive disarmament".

Bishop Dingman of the Des Moines Diocese is concerned about what the bishops mean by tolerating nuclear arms for deterrence. According to him, much of the bishops' meeting in May will be spent dealing with this issue. He says, "We have got to get at the task of disarmament. And what we bishops are trying to figure out is what we are going to say to the Reagan administration- if you don't do this by a certain time, then we will say it is immoral to create even one more new weapon and immoral even to have them. Now that is the crux of the argument...this is where we are ill at ease as bishops. Is it permissible to tolerate the presence of these weapons?

How long may we permit these weapons? What is the danger that some of them are going to be used in a critical period...or accidentally? Or what's an even greater problem, when other countries get it and we as the U.S. and Russia can no longer control those other nations use of that nuclear weapon. What will we do then? The major issue at the meeting in May is exactly that." I encourage all of you to support the bishops through prayer as they wrestle with this problem.

From the above quote we can get a feeling for the kind of struggles the bishops have gone through in forming their own consciences and in dialoguing with each other. In the letter they call us to join in the struggle to know where we stand and the struggle to learn to compassionately listen and speak to each other. They also call us to decide through prayer and study.

Bishop Dingman: "I feel that we must make decisions today in a setting of prayer and reflection. I had tried to think about the moral implications of the nuclear arms race in terms of, first of all, the scriptures. To ask myself, what is the mind of Christ? What is he telling me about nuclear arms?...Then I want people to study that document, to study the position of the U.S. Catholic bishops. And I want them to study it from a scriptural point of view. I want them to do that in prayerful reflection, always saying, What is the Holy Spirit saying to me? to say that in their own conscience and to follow that conscience ultimately even if it is in disagreement with what we bishops are saying. We are asking people to listen to us to become involved in the Great Debate....The Great Debate is going on right now.... It is best put by our Holy Father in his letter of Jan. 1, 1983, where he calls for dialogue on peace, and he says it has to be honest and patient dialogue. And we've got to get everyone involved. We may no longer say we will let the government decide, we'll let the administration decide, we'll let the military people decide, we'll let the Pentagon decide. No, it is a decision of the people and everybody must express where they are."

Lest the whole issue seem overwhelming, the bishops remind us that we have hope in our God. I will leave you with their message of hope.

"Hope is the capacity to live with danger without being overwhelmed by it; hope is the ability to struggle against obstacles even when they appear larger than life. Ultimately our hope rests in God who gave us life, sustains the world by his power and has called us to reverse the life of each person and all people." (p. 307)

All quotes are from the second draft of the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter entitled, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response", and from an interview with Bishop Maurice Dingman. +



Lulse Glik



## LETTERS

March 1, 1983

Dear Catholic Worker:

Something occurred last month that I felt might be of interest to Via Pacis readers and to the Iowa Resisters.

Several months ago I wrote a letter to the Selective Service stating my intentions to not register. In return, I received a certified letter warning me of the possible consequences. Knowing that they could easily find out that I'm ineligible for military service (a female veteran) I put the letter out of my mind.

Therefore, it caught me by surprise when I received a phone call at work (I'm a graduate stu-

dent at James Madison University) from an F.B.I. agent. He wanted to meet me that afternoon.

I was informed that my letter had caused the government some problems and that my signature of "S. Vos" implied my maleness.

I taped the conversation and admitted to writing the letter, though declined my reasons since they had been already stated in the correspondence.

I was forewarned of possible prosecution. Some people say I'm asking for trouble. I say when people are prosecuted for peaceful acts, they must be doing the right thing.

Taking a stand,  
S. Vos





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Mary Mullins

*"...the Church  
 will not hesitate  
 to take up the cause  
 of the poor  
 and to become the voice  
 of those who are not listened to  
 when they speak up,  
 not to demand charity,  
 but to ask for justice."*

—Pope John Paul II

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